

THE VOTER

A NEWSLETTER FROM



APRIL 2023

This Month's Features

[Thank You for Celebrating with Us!](#)

[What You Need to Know about the April Special Election](#)

[April Forum: The King County Crisis Centers Property Tax Levy – Know Before You Vote!](#)

[The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy: Reaching Consensus on Need for Positions is Just the Beginning!](#)

[Units Unite Us](#)

[LWVSKC's Voices of Democracy Celebration/Fundraiser](#)

[March Forum Update](#)

[March Board Brief](#)

[DEI Four-Part Series: Part III](#)

[Connecting with Community: Aviva Palencia](#)

[Book Review: The Digital Republic](#)

[We'd Like to Hear From You!](#)

Thank You for Celebrating with Us!

League of Women Voters celebrated its 103rd Birthday last month. Do you recall getting our Birthday Celebration Postcard in the mail? This past year LWVSKC members continued our century of work empowering voters and defending democracy. With your help, we were able to:

- Register and educate voters, prioritizing young voters and new citizens.
- Help to ensure safe and secure elections.
- Work to protect women's rights.
- Fight antidemocratic legislation and promote legislation that would further our democracy.
- Address environmental and social injustices.
- Further educate members and the King County community with several education and candidate forums.
- Demonstrate what non-partisan advocacy can accomplish in King County.

Thank you to all that have contributed to our 103rd Birthday Fund. To date, we have raised \$850!

We can and will do more with your continued support. If you would still like to contribute, check out our other funds [here](#).

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

What You Need to Know about the April Special Election

Paula Barnes, Voter Services Chair

Heads up, League members! There's a special election in April.

Ballots will begin arriving on Friday, Apr. 7, and election day is Tuesday, Apr. 25. There are four issues on the ballot:

1. Countywide
Proposition No. 1: Crisis Care Centers Levy

Funding for behavioral health services and capital facilities, including a countywide crisis care center network, increased residential treatment, mobile crisis care, post-discharge stabilization and workforce supports. It would authorize an additional nine-year property tax levy for collection beginning in 2024 at \$0.145 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

2. Kent School District No. 415
Proposition No. 1: General Obligation Bonds \$495,000,000

Funding to make districtwide safety, security and ADA improvements; modernize elementary schools for pre-K education; repair, remodel and upgrade school and administrative buildings, HVAC and building systems and technology; replace and install playgrounds, athletic facilities and sports fields; and expand operations facilities.

3. Public Hospital District No. 4 (Snoqualmie Valley Hospital)
Proposition No. 1: Levy Lid Lift for Health Care Services

Additional funding for primary care services, specialty care services, urgent care services, emergency medical services, rehabilitation services and other health care services and facilities. It would authorize a maximum regular property levy rate for collection in 2024 of \$0.70 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

4. Vashon-Maury Island Park & Recreation District
Proposition No. 1: Park District Levy Renewal for 2024 through 2027

A regular property tax levy of not more than \$0.45 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation in each of four consecutive years to pay operation and maintenance costs associated with the district's facilities.

The deadline for registering by mail or online to vote in this election is Monday, April 17. The deadline to register in person to vote in this election is Tuesday, April 25.

You can find all this information and more on the King County Elections [website](#). Want to get involved in League voter registration and voter education efforts? Contact: voterservices@lwvskc.org

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

April Forum: The King County Crisis Centers Property Tax Levy – Know Before You Vote!

Kim Albert, Program Chair
Mary Taylor, 1st Vice President

A promotional graphic for a virtual forum. The top section has a blue background with white text: "VIRTUAL FORUM" in large letters, "Thursday, April 13 • 7 pm" below it, and "Zoom Link Below" in a smaller font. To the right, on a white background, is the title "King County Crisis Centers Property Tax Levy" in blue, followed by "King County Special Election, April 25" and "Know Before You Vote" in a smaller font. Below the title, there are two columns of panelists. The left column is headed "Moderator" and features a photo of Michelle Baruchman with her name and title "Engagement Reporter, Seattle Times Mental Health Project" below. The right column is headed "Panelists" and features four photos of Girmay Zahilay, Leo Flor, Michelle Conley, and Maggie Hostnick, each with their name and title below. At the bottom left, there are logos for "LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY" and "ST MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT".

VIRTUAL FORUM
Thursday, April 13 • 7 pm
Zoom Link Below

King County Crisis Centers Property Tax Levy
King County Special Election, April 25
Know Before You Vote

Moderator

Michelle Baruchman
Engagement Reporter, Seattle Times Mental Health Project

Panelists

Girmay Zahilay
King County Councilmember

Leo Flor
Director, King County Department of Community and Human Services

Michelle Conley
REACH Director of Integrated Care

Maggie Hostnick
Director of Clinical Programs, Downtown Emergency Services Center

Presented by
LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY
ST MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

On April 13, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., LWVSKC is co-sponsoring a virtual informational forum with the Seattle Times Mental Health Project.

The subject: the King County Crisis Centers Property Tax Levy. The levy is on the King County ballot on April 25. Know before you vote! The forum will be moderated by Michelle Baruchman. Michelle is the engagement reporter for the Mental Health Project, a team at The Seattle Times that investigates systems of mental and behavioral health throughout Washington state.

Panelists include King County officials knowledgeable about the levy and community behavioral health experts:

- Girmay Zahilay, King County Councilmember, who co-sponsored the legislation.
- Leo Flor, Director, King County Department of Community and Human Services, whose department will play a major role in the implementation of levy components.
- Michelle Conley, REACH Director of Integrated Care, who has extensive experience with behavioral health systems and unhoused people and oversees drug user health initiatives.
- Maggie Hostnick, Director of Clinical Programs, Downtown Emergency Services Center, which has operated the Crisis Solution Center since 2012.

Register for the forum [here](#).

About the Levy:

The proposed levy would support the creation of five new regional crisis care centers distributed throughout the county, one of which would be solely focused on serving youth. The crisis care centers will provide immediate crisis services on a walk-in basis to people experiencing behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder) crises.

In addition, the levy will provide two key supporting functions:

1. It will restore mental health residential treatment bed capacity and expand treatment availability and sustainability in King County.
2. It will increase the sustainability and representativeness of the behavioral health workforce in King County through increased wages, apprenticeship programming and, where possible, reduction of costs such as insurance, childcare, caregiving, and fees or tuition associated with behavioral health training and certification.

If passed, this proposal would authorize an additional nine-year property tax levy for collection beginning in 2024 at \$0.145 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. An implementation plan must be submitted for approval to the King County Council by December 31, 2023. The levy could fund additional purposes subordinate to and consistent with the purposes identified above if identified in the implementation plan.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy: Reaching Consensus on Need for Positions is Just the Beginning!

Mary Taylor, 1st Vice President

During February and March, the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County participated in consensus meetings on a study completed by the League of Women Voters of Washington, "[The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy](#)."

The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the study with an eye toward reaching consensus on answers to a series of questions put forth by the Study Committee. The consensus derived from the process will then be used to develop LWVWA positions which both the state and local Leagues can use to advocate for changes to public policy to address the decline of local news.

The two-year study completed in late 2022 by a committee of ten League members from across the state, is the result of interviews with more than 50 scholars, elected officials, government leaders, journalists, other interested parties and a review of more than 500 documents. The Study Committee's task was not to present solutions; it was to provide information to make readers aware of the significance of the issue and to reach consensus on the need to move forward with the development of LWVWA consensus positions.

The LWVSKC held two consensus meetings to which all members were invited. The Unit Liaison also sent materials to units. In total, 50 LWVSKC members participated in the consensus process. The participants reached a super solid consensus in their agreement with most of the consensus statements which included:

- One of the main missions of all levels of the League is to provide civic and voter education to communities.
- It is important that freedom of the press, as enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution, prevails today.
- Local newspapers, as a cornerstone of a free press, are essential to our democracy.
- The government, at any level, should provide some type of financial support to newspapers.
- The crisis of local newspaper decline affects residents who are poor and those who live in rural communities more than other populations due to increased subscription prices, limited internet and device costs. There should be support for ensuring access for all to local news.

The consensus responses from each group were discussed at a March 11 Board meeting. The Board voted unanimously to report a unified response of consensus on all but one statement to LWVWA on behalf of LWVSKC.

Like the prior study completed by the LWVWA in 2022 on the Shoreline Management Act, “Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy” brought to light critical, compelling and, at times, disturbing information. The study made the powerful case that those of us concerned with protecting democracy should not only be aware of the study’s findings but should be actively strategizing and advancing measures to stem the tide.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Units Unite Us

Sarah Beth Miller, Unit Liaison

Last month in this space I shared some ways that Units have overcome fluctuations in member participation. This month, the emphasis is on the critical role of the Unit Leader. Sometimes, Unit members are reluctant to step up to the UL role. So, I invited our current ULs to comment on their experiences. Madeleine Benz (First Hill | Horizon House) and Connie Foster (Queen Anne | Magnolia | Ballard) volunteered to speak up!

Madeleine sees the basic functions of ULs as: organizing and running meetings, setting agendas, taking and making phone calls, seeking and making contacts with folks with information about issues that interest her Unit, and finding volunteers for a variety of tasks.

The pros of being a UL are pretty glorious, according to Madeleine! She lists as pros: providing service to the community; becoming an informed voter; consensus building; learning about and watching democracy at work; leadership education; team building; making new friends; meeting smart and savvy women; lifelong learning opportunities; time management; being part of a nationwide organization; meeting dynamic, committed, talented community leaders and elected officials; a sense of purpose in retirement; contributing to a democratic process in the here and now and — above all — helping to build a democratic legacy for future generations while honoring the nation's founders.

Of course, there are a few cons as well: difficulty finding volunteers, and too many daily LWV issues and emails from LWVSKC, State League and National League to keep track of. And all of this results in spending too much time on the computer!

Madeleine's tips for up-and-coming ULs?

1. A large Steering Committee (of 5 or 6) brings more creativity to the process.
2. It's best to stay on one issue and do it well.

Connie Foster shares her experience of being a UL:

"I began attending the Queen Anne, Magnolia and Ballard Unit meetings in September 2019. Kathy Pugh had been UL of the group for four years."

At the December 2019 meeting, Kathy announced that she would be stepping down as the UL, and she hoped that someone would step up to assume this role. But no one did step up, neither at that meeting nor at the next meeting in January.

Over the next few weeks, Connie writes, "I thought about the fact that Kathy had been a trooper to perform this role for four years and that she deserved to retire from the responsibilities. I called Kathy and told her that I would assume the role if she would train and co-lead with me for a couple of months. She agreed to this so our Unit would have consistency through the transition."

Taking on this leadership role gave Connie the added bonus of having the opportunity to learn Zoom just as most of the Units began meeting virtually in April 2020.

Connie sent out her first reminder email for the April meeting, and she shouldered the responsibility of setting the agenda and leading the meeting:

“As 2020 and 2021 progressed we continued to meet on Zoom. Several of the members who used to attend the in-person meetings did not attend the Zoom meetings. There were months when there were only two or three attendees ... I being one of them!”

During this period, Connie considered stepping down as the Unit leader, and possibly attending the Online Unit instead of her own. However, in September 2021, the QA, etc. Unit members decided to give up on Zoom and have in-person meetings, instead. The September meeting was held in the early evening at a member's garden.

“This was doable because we were still on daylight saving time. But a big change came for the October meeting when we had to meet after dark. Some of our members no longer drove at night, but they still wanted to continue meeting in person,” Connie notes.

Connie contacted the Magnolia UC Church where the Unit had met previously, and they were granted permission to meet there every month by the pastor. The Unit felt so strongly about wanting to meet in person that:

“We agreed to the restrictions of no eating or drinking at our meeting, wearing masks and social distancing. We now have anywhere from 6 to 11 members who attend the daytime meeting monthly! We don't social distance as much as before (we sit around a table) and masks are optional.”

Connie has some ideas about the best way to conduct meetings for her Unit:

“From the beginning ... I've included paragraphs about the monthly forums that are scheduled. I read every email from LWVSKC to see if there's an advisement about something happening that my Unit members should know about. I'm lucky that some of our members (Kathy Pugh and now two new members, Anne Beller and Becky Castilleja) have come prepared with notes about topics that are in the emails. They are wonderful about leading the discussion about these topics. I print many of the emails to share at our meetings and do forward the emails to some of the members after the meeting. I also pick up and take home two members who do not drive anymore. They are long-time members who actively participate at the meetings and express their thoughts and ideas about LWVSKC's topics, forums and studies. I'm retired, so I have the time to read the LWV emails, and I have the time to answer email questions from our Unit's members.

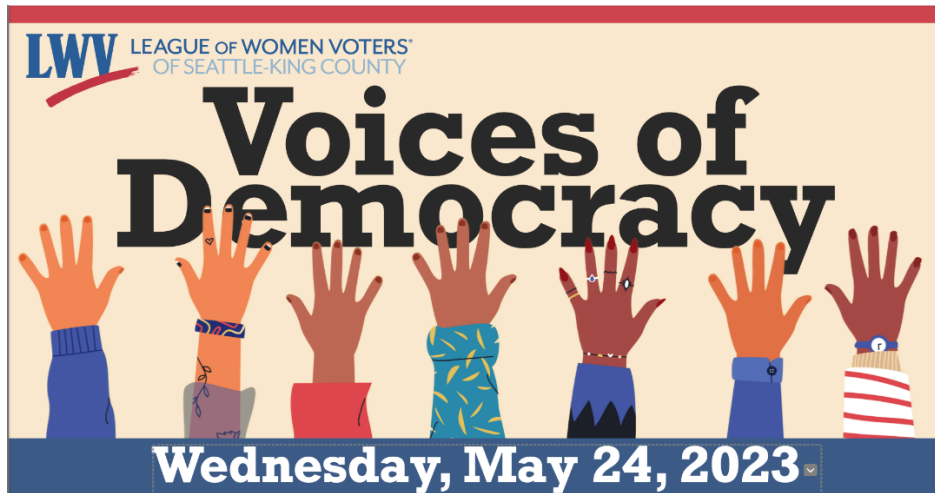
“I've also been supported by Kathy and Carol Burton who have subbed for me as co-leaders when I've had to be away from our monthly meetings — so, I am lucky!”

Connie adds in closing, “Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share what I do as the Queen Anne, Magnolia, Ballard, etc. Unit Leader. Please feel free to email or call me with any questions about becoming a Unit Leader!”

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

LWVSKC's Voices of Democracy Celebration/Fundraiser

Barb Tengtio, 2nd Vice President



League of Women Voters Seattle-King County is back with our annual Voices of Democracy celebration/fundraiser! It is scheduled for Wednesday, May 24, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Sea Mar Museum of Chicano/a/Latino/a Culture. The event center is located at 9635 Des Moines Memorial Drive, Seattle 98108.

This year's celebration/fundraiser will focus on our youth and underserved communities and why it is so important to get them involved in civics and encourage their voter empowerment. Every citizen has a voice in our democracy, and that voice is their vote. Help LWVSKC to make all voices heard!

LWVSKC is excited to welcome two special guests from Washington State's Latino Community Fund, Aline Aguirre and Cristina Ortega, to speak on the need for civic engagement, especially with our youth and underserved communities.

In America, young people ages 18-24 are less likely to vote than any other age group, and Washington State youth vote less than other young people in the Pacific Northwest. But youth engagement increases when young people get access to civic education. A [2020 study](#) from Tufts University showed:

- That young people who received civic education in high school were more likely to vote and participate in civic activities, more knowledgeable about voting processes, and became more invested in elections.
- That civic education is an equity issue, as white students get the most access to civics lessons and black students get the least access.

Meanwhile, a similar study at Yale found that youth voting increased by 5.7 percent after students were given a demonstration that allowed them to cast a practice ballot.

Underserved communities often receive little or no GOTV outreach on election information, candidate forums, and so on. This is further complicated when language barriers arise.

Engaging young people and underserved communities reaps benefits over time. Political scientists at Penn State have found that most adults are either “habitual voters” or “habitual nonvoters,” so developing the “voting habit” can pay dividends for decades to come.

LWVSKC’s guest speakers, knowledgeable and experienced with youth and underserved communities, will speak on the need to strengthen and support these voices.

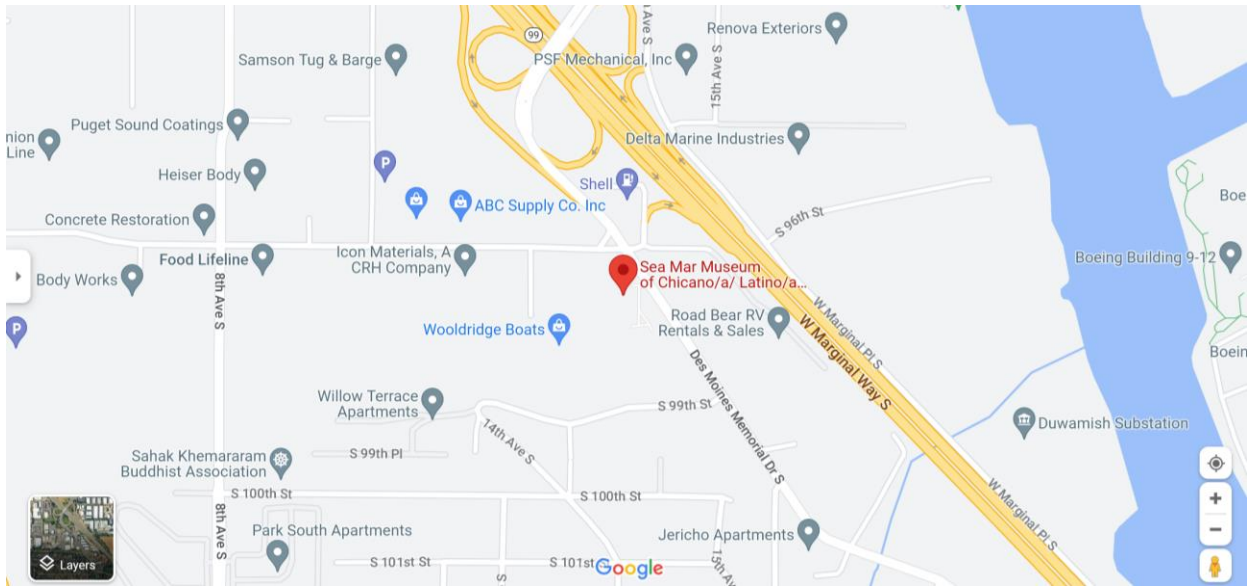
Aline Aguirre, current Youth Organizer in King County for LCF’s Alianza Youth Leadership Program, will speak on the importance of elevating youth voices. Originally from Mexico and an experienced mental health advocate with a bachelor’s in psychology from the University of Texas at Dallas, Aline has worked with Latinx immigrant youth and families since graduating from college in 2018. Aline joined Alianza as an Alianza Fellow in 2021 and today works to empower youth to raise their voice through collective work to bring change to their communities.

Following Aline will be Cristina Ortega, Washington State Manager for Civic Engagement and Advocacy, who will talk about what it’s like to navigate voting as a BIPOC, person who speaks limited English, immigrant, or member of another underserved community. Additionally, she will discuss what organizations like LWVSKC can do to fully enfranchise all voters. Learn what you can do!

LWVSKC has been encouraging citizens to get civically involved since 1920 — that’s over one hundred years! Our traditional programming of voter services, research and advocacy has historically been funded directly by our membership and community donations, with occasional grants.

We need you to join Voices of Democracy this May 24 to learn about the current and planned democracy work for youth and underserved communities. You will gain great insights from Aline and Cristina, meet other community members involved in voter empowerment, enjoy some youth-led entertainment, celebrate with Voices of Democracy award winners and have the opportunity to support LWVSKC’s ongoing mission to empower voters and defend democracy.

LWVSKC is intentionally holding our Voices of Democracy May 24 event at Sea Mar not only because of its lovely facility and easy access but also to promote awareness of their museum. You are welcome to come an hour or so early to view the Sea Mar Museum of Chicano/a/Latino/a Culture for free. It showcases their history in the State of Washington from post-war immigration to the present time. Here is a map for reference:



Won't you join us? Tickets are available [here](#).

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County is a nonprofit, nonpartisan political organization that seeks to empower voters and defend democracy by encouraging informed and active participation in government, increasing understanding of major public policy issues and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.

The Latino Community Fund cultivates new leaders, supports cultural and community-based nonprofit organizations and improves the quality of life for all Washingtonians. Their vision is a vibrant and civically-engaged Latino community in Washington.

Sea Mar Community Health Centers is a community-based organization committed to providing quality, comprehensive health, human, housing, educational and cultural services to diverse communities, specializing in service to Latinos.

Other Ways to Participate:

We need volunteers! If you want to help set up, clean up, man table displays, and so on, head over to our [volunteer opportunities page](#). If you have questions, reach out to Dee Dee Ellis, the VOD Coordinator, at DeeDee@lwvskc.org.

Make a pledge to underwrite our honorariums! You can pledge anywhere from \$25 to the full \$1,500 that we need. Contact Meg Van Wyk, our Development Chair, at meg.vanwyk@lwvskc.org if you're interested!

Offer florist services! If you are a florist or have connections with one, we would love your support. We need about 15 centerpieces, possibly orchids, at a discount. The centerpieces would be for sale with your business card at the end of the event. The florist would also be recognized in our event program and promotion. Contact Meg Van Wyk at meg.vanwyk@lwvskc.org or Barb Tengtio at 2ndvp@lwskc.org for more information!

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

March Forum Update

Kim Albert, Program Chair

On March 9th we held a forum to discuss the movie, “Love in the Time of Fentanyl.” The movie follows a group of misfits, artists and drug users who operate a renegade safe injection site in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. It portrays a community fighting to save lives and keep hope alive in a neighborhood ravaged by the overdose crisis. It is an intimate, observational look beyond the stigma of injection drug users, revealing the courage of those facing terrible tragedy in a neighborhood often referred to as ground zero of the overdose crisis.

All forum attendees gave the movie high marks. Consistent comments included that:

- We learned a lot about drug use, the extreme dangers of fentanyl, and harm reduction as one approach to saving lives while dealing with addiction.
- The movie helped people better understand and have more empathy for users and their families.
- The safe injection site not only saved lives but also helped users who operated the site develop a sense of community and purpose that helped some get past their addictions.
- The staff burnout from seeing so much death from overdose is real and similar to what many healthcare workers continue to feel today.

There was a general consensus that this was a great movie that we should further promote! Fortunately, it is not too late to see the film. You can view the film at your leisure on the PBS streaming site, Independent Lens, [here](#).

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

March Board Brief

Barbara Erickson, Secretary

The Board met in person, except for two members who joined via Zoom and another two who were absent, on Saturday, March 11. It is a rare pleasure to see each other’s faces at the League office across the conference table covered with delicious snacks and breakfast treats. If you become a board member, this could be your future.

Our budget each year must include a per-member fee we pay to the State and National League. The benefits we receive from these affiliations are important, and while the fees do impact our budget, it behooves us to remember that program ideas, endorsements, training and lobbying are just the iceberg tip of the value these fees provide to the Seattle-King County League.

In addition to income from grants and fundraising efforts, the Board is focusing on steps to reduce expenditures to manage the bottom line. Please do your part to ensure the health of our budget and purchase a ticket to the Voices of Democracy celebration/fundraising event on May 24 at the Sea Mar Museum and Event Center. Look for a full notice and link in this newsletter. If you are unable to attend, consider gifting a ticket to another member or anyone you know who would enjoy this event.

A reminder: any of you can attend the State Convention in Pasco which runs from May 4 to May 7. LWVWA will be sending out a registration link in its upcoming electronic newsletters, so watch for that or check for more info on lwwva.org.

On the agenda for programs/forums is the April 13 forum concerning the King County Crisis Center Property Levy. The Action Committee considered preparing an endorsement on this initiative for the next ballot. However, our team lacked the bandwidth to carry this out. Instead, we are planning an educational forum to inform the voting public on this issue. Our League is in partnership with The Seattle Times Mental Health Project to present this forum. Planning such an event to ensure that the public receives an even-handed presentation of the issues is time-consuming and challenging. While an important part of the League's job is to register voters, an equally significant service we provide is educating that enfranchised group. Our forums are intended to keep the voter aware of issues that will appear on ballots or become significant in the State Legislature. Because the forums are recorded, they can be viewed at any time after their premier showing. If this process interests you, please contact Kim Albert, the Program Chair to volunteer.

Membership is now close to 500. Consider the auto-renewal option on our [website](http://lwwva.org) to give yourself one less thing to do each year. Please keep in mind, we are a volunteer organization — this includes the website, social media and communications teams. LWVSKC is always looking for helping hands, and if you can volunteer at any level for a short or extended period of time, it is much appreciated.

Mary Taylor, 1st Vice President, reported on the Decline of Local News consensus process and outcome. She then moved for the Board to report to the State League that the Seattle-King County League had come to consensus on 8 of the 9 questions posed. The motion passed. For further information, see the article on this process in the April Voter. There was another opportunity to learn more about this critical issue at a breakfast Zoom meeting with Attorney General Bob Ferguson, co-sponsored with the Rotary Club.

Other important topics were discussed:

- Voter Services reported that a high number of volunteers attended the first organizational meeting to sign up for GOTV and Registration Training.
- Youth Engagement reported that 48 schools received The State We're In books and teacher's guides with an eye to future involvement with civics instruction via training modules adapted from the New Jersey League.
- The Board president applied for a new grant to purchase TSWI books for the 3-5 grade levels.
- There are many new elections coming up: port, municipal, KC Elections, county. Look for more specific news in this and future newsletters.

Detailed minutes are posted on the website once they are approved by the Board. The February Minutes will be posted.

Be safe out there.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

column

DEI Four-Part Series: Part III

Barb Tengtio, 2nd Vice President

In accordance with the League of Women Voters' mission to empower voters and defend democracy, we commit to creating equity for all voters and recognizing that democracy is strengthened by the inclusion of all the diverse voices within the community.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) are not buzzwords. They are commitments to our organizational mission.

In an effort to assist all members in embracing this commitment to DEI, the League wants to educate and enlighten by provoking discussion around this topic. LWVSKC is sharing LWVUS information in a four-part series. In February we covered DEI Basics, and in March we learned how to commit to and understand DEI as an individual. This month's objective is to provide tools and education on how to apply a DEI lens to our work and center DEI in that work.

LWVSKC encourages you to review and discuss at least one or two of the following resources at your next Unit meeting or with friends to enhance understanding and application.

Resources:

- [Applying a DEI Lens to Our League Work](#)
 - Part of a training series included in a grant program that 10 states participated in
- [What to Ask When Examining Your Work Through a DEI Lens](#)
- [Recruiting and Building Strong Boards](#)

- [Understanding and Partnering with Your Community Part 1](#)
 - Part of a training series included in a grant program that 10 states participated in
- [Understanding and Partnering with Your Community - Part 2](#)
 - Part of a training series included in a grant program that 10 states participated in
- [A Guide to Using PTR \(Preferences, Traditions and Requirements\)](#)
- ["The League Way" PTR Exercise](#)
- [Student Involvement: Tips for Bridging the Age Gap](#) (Shur Fellows Guidance, June 2018)
- [Able-Bodied Privilege and Accessible Event Planning](#) (Shur Fellows Guidance, April 2019)
- [The Changing Demographics of America's Suburbs](#) (CityLab article)
- [Why Detroit Residents Pushed Back Against Tree-Planting](#) (CityLab article)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



CONNECTING WITH
community

Connecting with Community: Aviva Palencia

Heather Kelly, President
Aviva Palencia, Voter Editor

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxAMJUd-JNg>



Heather Kelly: Okay, so Connecting with Community took a little break while I was busy doing other things and now we're back. This month is our awesome Voter Editor, Aviva Palencia. Yeah. Aviva. Thanks for being here.

Aviva Palencia: Of course. Thanks for having me.

Heather: Yeah. So okay, I guess I'll just start with ... you've been with us now, what, like six months?

Aviva: Oh my god. I guess, I interviewed in December.

Heather: Oh, okay.

Aviva: So, but that has been about four months.

Heather: Four months.

Aviva: Which is longer than I thought.

Heather: But I feel like you've stepped into the role so soon after we spoke initially that ... yeah. And then it seems like you kind of hit your stride really quickly, so. How has it felt like settling in?

Aviva: It's been good. Like, I did kind of jump in quickly. But also, you also gave me a lot of leeway. And help. And I, since January, systematized some things for myself and have a pretty good process going.

Heather: Amazing. Maybe you can teach me how to do that. I feel like having a system is really helpful, like, the larger your role is, almost. But in your — I feel like your role is one of the ones, as Voter Editor, where there are a lot of, I mean, inherently, like, a lot of moving pieces every month. Does it kind of feel that way to you?

Aviva: It does. And I think that kind of gives me an excuse to, like, be easy on myself. Like, if something doesn't come through, it's like, oh, well, you know, things happen.

Heather: Yeah.

Aviva: But, also, I mean ... we have team meetings that allow me to regroup well enough, and I know who to contact to tie up loose ends, so. It's pretty — it's not bad.

Heather: Good! Yeah. Okay. So, I mean, I know a little bit about how you, like, meandered over to the League. But do you want to share for our members a little bit, kind of, about yourself and how you came to apply for the role?

Aviva: Sure. Yeah. So, I am a recent grad, or I was when I started. And I majored in linguistics and Spanish and had a concentration in translation. So, my background was kind of in editing in that there's a lot of editing involved in translation. But I didn't think I could take translation as far as, like, into a career. So, I pivoted a little bit. And then I worked as an editorial intern for a summer in, like, small literary publishing. And that was really cool. So, I wanted to market myself a little bit

more as a writer and editor. And I found this opportunity. And I was like, that sounds like a great, relatively low-stakes but still involved thing to do.

Heather: I love that. That is, like, exactly what we were going for when we put the word out. Because, you know, we want to create roles that people can use as, like, stepping stones into a career or even, like, into retirement. You know what I mean? Like, sort of into whatever is next for them. So, it's cool to hear that it sounds like more or less like the role is what you were hoping it would be. Is that fair to say?

Aviva: Yeah. Definitely. Yeah.

Heather: That that's awesome to hear. One of the things that I struggle with as President of the League — and I know the rest of the Board, we've been talking about this, too — is that so often, it's, like, impossible to know how a role is really going to look and feel until you're in it. And especially over the last few years, like, there have been so many, kind of, unforeseeables that have dramatically expanded or reduced the scope of different roles in the League in ways that just have made them unsuitable for the people who originally stepped into them. And when there's that disconnect between, sort of, like, expectations and reality, it can be so frustrating as a volunteer. I mean, I've definitely been in that situation. So, we're working on becoming, like, more transparent to really attract folks with the skills and interests to the roles that are, like, best suited for them. But it's definitely, you know, in the area where we're aware it still needs improvement, so. Anytime we get somebody who's like, yeah, it's more or less what I thought it would be, it's helpful because it's like a data point that we're heading in the right direction.

Aviva: Right. Well, good. I'm glad.

Heather: Yeah, so, one of the things that you mentioned that I wanted to follow up on is the idea of, like, editing being necessary for translation because that feels really counterintuitive to me and I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about, like, why that is.

Aviva: Totally. I love talking about — no one ever asks me about translation.

Heather: Oh, oh, I'm totally excited to talk to you about this.

Aviva: Yeah. So. Well, I recently wrote an article that talked about, like a, an 80/20 rule, or a 20/80 rule about writing where, like, 20% of the process is writing and 80% is refining and editing. And that's totally true for translation. Well, refining, editing and research

Heather: Okay.

Aviva: You know, all the other stuff. I was doing both actual translation and also editing of other people's translations before they went out to be used. And that was just what took up the most time.

Heather: Yeah.

Aviva: Yeah.

Heather: Yeah. So, when you're editing somebody's words into another language, which I guess is, like, one way of thinking about translation, what is the goal as, like, a translator editor? I mean, yeah, how do you stay true to the person's sort of intent while still making it, like, comprehensible?

Aviva: Right. Well, I did mostly, like, legal documents, certificates and drier texts that didn't have a lot of authorial intent or anything.

Heather: Got it.

Aviva: I did do a little bit of literary translation. And it's like a whole different game. But, you know, even in these formal documents, you have to know the lingo.

Heather: Yeah.

Aviva: Yeah, the legalese a lot of times. Although I didn't get very far into — like, I didn't do super, super hard stuff because I'm not, I don't know anything about law.

Heather: Yeah, I get that as a lawyer. It's definitely its own language, even when you're speaking it in your native language.

Aviva: Right, right.

Heather: Yeah.

Aviva: So. So, I would check for just, like, typos and things. And then also, usually translators will have a stronger language. And I would happen to get documents where I think I had the opposite stronger language that they did, so I could catch little errors or, like, nuances in meaning. And then I would talk to my co-workers and be like, hey, what do you think about switching this? And that was how that process went.

Heather: That's awesome. I feel like it is critical to have other brains that you can pick about this, like, sort of more subjective stuff.

Aviva: Mmhm.

Heather. Yeah, that makes total sense to me. So, did you grow up speaking Spanish and English? Or how did you come to speak Spanish?

Aviva: So my father — yeah. We spoke Spanish at home for, like, the first couple years of my life, and then my mother gave up once I learned English and would only speak English. But I also lived with people who spoke Spanish to each other, and not to me. So, I just absorbed a lot through them. And then in middle school, I started taking Spanish classes formally and then didn't stop. I took, well, there was a brief interlude of Japanese in high school. But other than that, I didn't stop.

Heather: So, what did, when your, when you started taking Spanish in middle school, what was your mom's reaction?

Aviva: I don't remember. I think she was happy about it. She's always been passionate about getting me to speak Spanish, although neither of us are good on, like, the follow-through of practicing. But, yeah, she learned it as a second language and used it for work for most of my life, still does now. And, so, it's a huge passion of hers. And she's also just the language nerd, so she's excited to get to talk about it with me. Yeah.

Heather: That's so funny! So, you turned into a language nerd, too.

Aviva: Yeah, my grandmother is also a language nerd.

Heather: Oh my gosh, what a cool family legacy. I am, like, all about that. That's rad.

Aviva: Mmhm, it's fun.

Heather: Very cool. Okay, so, let's see, let's move on to hopes and dreams.

Aviva: Sure.

Heather: Okay. So what, in your, like, ideal scenario, what path would you kind of take next, career-wise?

Aviva: Well, I want to get a copywriting or copy editing, like, gig. Long term. I would like to work more in editing than writing. But I know I'm going to do both either way. Editing is just more fun for me. I also would love to get back into, like, small publishing. The community was nice, and I liked the office environment. It was just a good place to be. But those two paths are a little different, so. I'm going to — I'll end up in whatever one comes first.

Heather: Right. Right. Embraces you.

Aviva: Right, yeah.

Heather: That's really cool. I feel like everywhere I look these days, there are little or not-so-little communities of writers and editors sort of popping up, you know, either sort of, like, race or cultural heritage-based affinity groups and, sort of, support groups or peer review groups or, and it's just, it seems like kind of unique to that profession to have these sort of affiliations and professional networks. Are you, like, kind of tangentially or directly involved in any of those kinds of communities?

Aviva: I was a little bit in Massachusetts during college, which was, you know, bad planning on my part, because I knew I wasn't going to live there. But, yeah, I worked with a small translation co-op and just got into the translation scene over there a bit. And, of course, it was very connected to, like, there's a huge Spanish-speaking population there.

Heather: Yeah.

Aviva: A lot of them were also like cultural resources, or like resource sites. Here, yeah, not so much.

Heather: Yeah. Well, let me see if I can reach out to a couple of the writers that I used to share a coworking space with. They're, like, all different kinds of writers. But one of the things that they do is, one of them is a teacher. She's not at UW, I want to say she's at, like, North Seattle College. And she's always plugging her students into, like, different communities based on their specific interests in the profession. So, if that feels helpful, I can totally do that.

Aviva: Yeah, I'd love that. Yeah, I mean, I know there's all these small, just, niche things going on that I haven't fully, you know, sifted through. So if anyone with a more pinpointed way to sift through that I greatly appreciate.

Heather: Absolutely, it can feel I mean, overwhelming for me, as somebody who's trying to kind of like get back into the workforce, just the number of different events and like happy hours or luncheons, or online, you know, events. It's just, it's sort of like, I don't, I have, like, decision paralysis. And I don't know if you can relate, but.

Aviva: Definitely.

Heather: Yeah, I know. And for me, it's always, like, nice when I already know somebody in the community, you know, before I sort of, like, jump in just because, I don't know, it can be a little intimidating, like, putting yourself out there.

Aviva: Mmhm.

Heather: So, I feel like ... I want to ask you, as somebody who's kind of new to the League, is there anything that you feel like surprises you about the League? Or you have questions about? Or you'd be interested in learning more about?

Aviva: Well, I was talking to Allison about the old Voters, and how they were kind of structured around mostly studies.

Heather: Yeah.

Aviva: Yeah. And how there's kind of, there's this hole that's been left behind because it doesn't happen that way anymore. And, so, something that she, I'm sure, wants to raise and now I do, too, is to really evaluate what we want to put in The Voter and like, yeah.

Heather: Yeah.,

Aviva: Like if we can find big things like that again to include.

Heather: Yeah.

Aviva: Not that there aren't big things in The Voter. There still are. But it's a little bit more of, like, haphazard, I think.

Heather: Totally. Yeah, I hear that too. Like, there's this sense that there was this thread kind of running through our events and our newsletter and our meetings that is missing now. And I think, you know, it probably it's probably interesting to hear that as a Voter Editor, sort of, the history of, like, the, the piece of communication that you're now, like, leading. And I think it's one

of those things where if folks don't have the energy and enthusiasm to, like, do the study, then, I mean, where is their energy and enthusiasm? And how can that become the new thread? Right?

Aviva: Mmhm. Yeah.

Heather: Because it's still there. It's just sort of pointed away from some of the research-focused projects and more out in the community, I think. That's what I'm seeing, where folks want to be out with the voters or prospective voters or future voters, encouraging them, so. I think one of the things that we're doing is, like, pulling folks together with the help of our new Voter Services Chair, Paula, to try to get more of that energy sort of centralized under one lead. And hopefully, we can grow out from there. But it's, you know, the other challenge is that the League is really like a generalist organization in a sea of increasing, like, specialization. And so, I feel like there's this tendency to have lots of different things going on in a way that feels, like, almost scattered or the way that you put it, like, haphazard. And so, bringing folks back to our mission impact work with a voter focus at the heart of it, I feel like is, you know, what Paula and the rest of the Board are really working on. But it's helpful to have that perspective. Definitely.

Aviva: Definitely.

Heather: Um, well, I super-duper appreciate you being in this role. I had a chance to talk with one of the past League presidents who also was a former Voter Editor, Stephanie, and she was just filled with positive things to say about the current format of The Voter, and she's really pleased to hear that we're still producing it in print for the members for whom that like really makes a difference. And so, yeah, I mean, your impact is definitely being felt.

Aviva: I'm so glad.

Heather: Yeah, yeah.

Aviva: There's more to come!

Heather: Yay! Awesome.

Heather: Well, I'm going to scamper off here. It looks like the sun might be, like, trying to come out. I don't know. I'll take it, though.

Aviva: Yeah, for sure.

Heather: I'm going to go play. And, yeah, thanks again. Enjoy the rest of your Monday.

Aviva: You too, you too.

Heather: Okay, I'll talk to you soon.

Aviva: Alright, see you later.

Heather: Bye.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

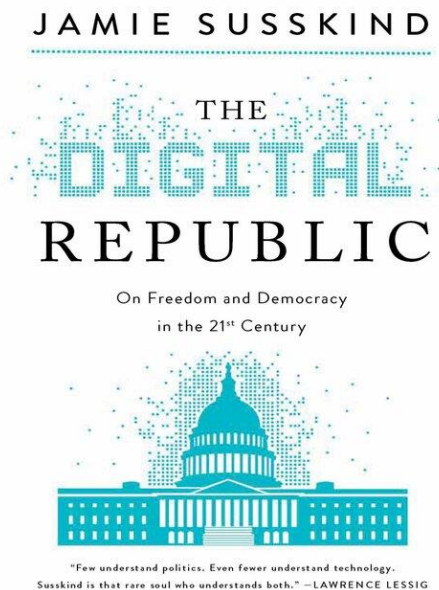


book reviews

The Digital Republic: On Freedom and Democracy in the 21st Century

By Jamie Susskind

Review by Vicky Downs



Jamie Susskind writes about the “unaccountable power” of the internet in the hands of wealthy leaders of organizations such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and others using digital technology. Those with power tend to resist being regulated. In fact, there is little to control these digital entities. Computer code “operates as a kind of law,” but not rules and laws decided by legislators and judges. It’s a “kind of law embedded in tech itself.” For instance, to access the many programs on the internet, you must use the correct password. If you don’t, it won’t work.

Susskind tells us that “unaccountable power of any kind is a disease that eats away at society. It erodes the bonds of community that hold us together.” We feel this disease when lobbyists and special interest groups “capture the regulatory process of Twitter, for example, and turn it to their own advantage,” perhaps by telling

and spreading lies.

“In the eighteenth century [many] saw markets as self-correcting ecosystems that needed little external intervention,” Susskind writes. They thought that, left to themselves, “markets would accumulate wealth” and regulate the conduct of people working in the market.

In contrast, Susskind shows us how Amazon’s systems chide workers who fail to pack their boxes quickly, as there is no way to opt out of digital monitoring. Consumers can’t opt out of surveillance as they walk down the street. In reality, we are all “living a full and meaningful life with digital technologies designed and controlled by others. There is no way to opt out.” In time, the people analytics that Google and others pick up could eventually replace person-to-person

interviews and CVs altogether. Employers will find all the information they need in the data collected about the interviewee.

We should be worried about digital technology, even when it's being used in ways that are not worrying. A great many ordinary citizens believe in the power of the individual and their vote and may not worry that Big Tech picks up their information. However, when Big Tech fails to create accurate tools such as facial-recognition systems that lock out some people from their building. These tools are often trained on white faces: they can't see darker tones. These people are often left with no way to bring the issue to a court of law.

Susskind says "many human rights [such as] privacy, freedom of expression and non-discrimination ... can be threatened by digital technology." In fact, he states: "The defining political relationship of the time [is] between those who design and control digital technologies and those who now live under the power of those technologies."

Susskind tells us that Big Tech is creating new regulations, which affect not only the U.S. but the entire world. He shows us how Big Tech needs regulating. He analyses ways our government has been inadequate and presents ways we might control the internet and make it more helpful to us all.

"This book argues that it is time to try a different way of thinking and a new way of governing," Susskind says. Clearly, it is important to do this "before the chance disappears forever."

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

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Want to stop by our office? We have office hours every Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We're located at:

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[Return to Table of Contents](#)